

# What's next



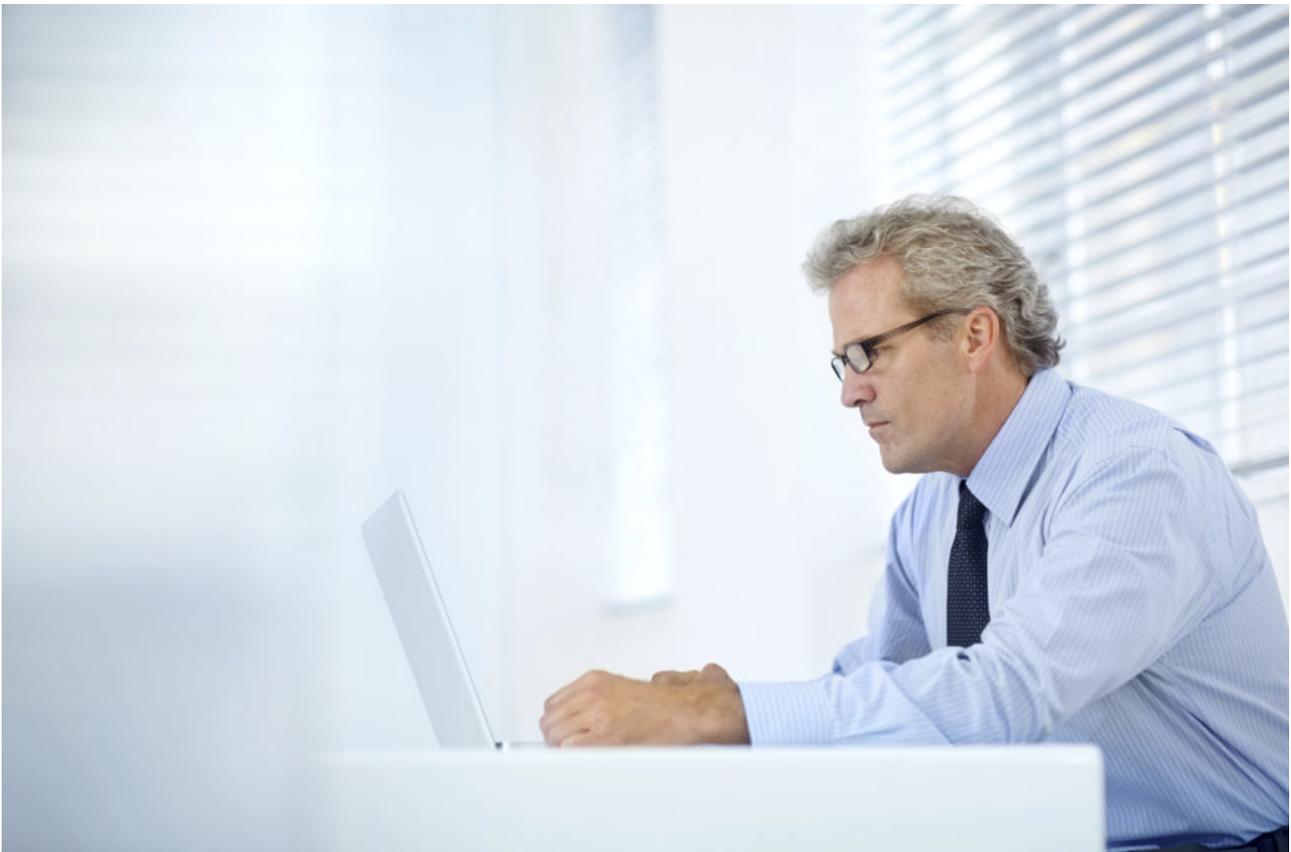
Dragon Professional

## Enjoy the benefits of working from home

With a big shift to working from home, individuals are realising the great gains it can provide in terms of both productivity and wellbeing. Meanwhile, employers are noticing the potential for reduced office space requirements which would mean cost savings, and considering whether it is possible to have people work from home some or all of the time longer term, and if so, how they provide all the necessary technology to allow that to happen. This is a great opportunity for both individuals and organisations to change things for the better.

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Like a lot of other people I've been working from home recently. For those who have been doing this for the first time, and even those who have extended what was a once-a-week or now-and-then occurrence into the everyday, the experience will have probably been quite a revelation. Many people have found they prefer working from home for a multitude of different reasons, which broadly fall into two camps:

- **Productivity gains.** With no distracting 'water cooler moments' and meetings that are scheduled and focused rather than 'on the hoof' and perhaps sketchy, there is often less time lost to things that, while they may be pleasurable, are not strictly speaking, about the job. Moreover, work has become more outcomes focused, more led by getting tasks done than by spending hours being seen to be busy. Work is focused, practical and streamlined.
- **Wellbeing gains.** While scheduled activities like meetings and deadlines still exist, there is increased flexibility to handle these in ways that suit individuals best. Morning larks and night owls can flex the day. Family or carer commitments can more easily be accommodated. If you're home-schooling time can be taken out for that. Time not spent commuting is now time added to your day. For some people that is quite literally hours of new time every day.

This is of course just a sketch, and what each individual experiences as productivity and wellbeing gains will be different. But for both individuals and organisations there are two hugely important learning points: for many people, working from home is preferable to being at the office, and for many organisations supporting working from home can deliver lower office costs, higher productivity and happier staff.

Organisations are now looking for tools to use in the longer term to help support a new approach to productivity. This will mean increased use of cloud and Software as a Service. It will mean revisiting how productivity and workflows are managed, and how people collaborate to get things done. With so much of work for many of us focused on document production and management, that's one of the key areas likely to get early attention.

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